

Orthodox Church in America + Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Elevation of the Holy Cross  
Orthodox Church  
Williamsport, PA.



Sunday of Orthodoxy  
*1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Great Lent*  
March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026

# Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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***Today's Scripture Readings:***  
***Epistle:*** Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2  
***Gospel:*** St. John 1:43-51

***A warm welcome to ALL this morning! **Everyone** is invited to join us  
for some fellowship after the Liturgy in the Parish Hall!***

## **This Week at Holy Cross**

+ Church is **open** on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 7-9:30am for private prayer, quiet time and/or Confession. Kindly let Fr Seraphim know if you are coming for Confession.

+ ***9<sup>th</sup> Hour, Presanctified Liturgy, Lenten potluck*** – Wednesday March 4<sup>th</sup> \* 5:30pm

+ ***9<sup>th</sup> Hour, Presanctified Liturgy, Lenten potluck*** – Friday March 6<sup>th</sup> \* 5:30pm

+ ***Great Vespers*** – Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup> \* 5pm

+ ***Hours, Divine Liturgy*** – **Sunday of St Gregory Palamas** March 8<sup>th</sup> \* 9:40am

\*\* ***March Benevolence*** – St. Tikhon seminarian Rdr. John Barrett

## **Our Giving – February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026**

Tithes/Offerings - \$2,029.25 / Online Giving - \$570.45

Candle Offerings - \$5.00 / Benevolence - \$5.00

***Thank you all for your generosity to Our Parish!***

**Regarding Holy Communion:** Only those faithful who are Orthodox Christians and have properly prepared themselves by **fasting, prayer** [i.e., **Prayers Before Communion**], **recent confession**, **are at peace with everyone**, and who were *at least present for the reading of the Epistle and Gospel* should approach to receive the Holy Eucharist. If you have any questions about Communion, please see Fr. Seraphim. 😊

### † **1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Great Lent: Sunday of Orthodoxy**

“The first Sunday of Great Lent is called the Sunday of Orthodoxy because it commemorates the restoration of the Holy Icons and the triumph of the Orthodox Faith against the terrible heresy of the Iconoclasts, i.e. those heretics who refused to honor the Holy Icons. For more than a hundred years the Church was disturbed by the evil doctrine of iconoclasm.

The first Emperor to persecute the Church was Leo the Isaurian, and the last was Theophilus, the spouse of Saint Theodora (February 11), who reigned after her husband's death and re-established Orthodoxy in the time of Patriarch Methodios (June 14). Empress Theodora proclaimed publicly that we do not kiss the Icons as a sign of worship, nor do we honor them as "gods," but as images of their prototypes.

In the year 843, on the first Sunday of the Fast, Saint Theodora and her son, Emperor Michael, venerated the Holy Icons together with the clergy and the people. Since that time this event has been commemorated every year, because it was definitively determined that we do not worship the Icons, but we honor and glorify all the Saints who are depicted on them. We worship only the Triune God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and no one else, neither a Saint, nor an Angel.” ([oca.org](http://oca.org))

“We celebrate this day as a day of victory, as a day of triumph for the Orthodox Faith of Christ and restoration of the Sacred Icons to the Churches of the Faithful Christian People. Over eleven hundred years have passed since the generations of those Orthodox Christians who surrendered their liberties and their lives to save images composed of

wood and paint. The controversy known as Iconoclasm, a period of 150 convulsive years, was truly a proving-ground for our Orthodox Faith. Against those who treated the Sacred Icons as idols, the Church of Christ emerged victorious.

As we affirm in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, the Church has never worshipped idols. Such an accusation would be absurd, especially in view of the injunction of St. John, the Beloved Disciple: Little children, guard yourselves against the idols. (I John 5:21). Rather, it has always been understood, as St. Basil the Great states so eloquently: The honor rendered to the icon ascends to the Prototype. Thus the icons become points of entry to the Divine Presence - windows and doors opening onto Heaven itself. The honor, love and veneration that we render, is not rendered to the material elements from which the icon is composed.

By the grace and power of God, they ascend to the prototype, the one who is represented. And inasmuch as every Saint of the Church reflects, as it were, the light of Christ Himself, the Prototype of every icon is Christ Himself, Who is the Icon of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature (Colossians 1:15). Or to put it more simply, every icon is an icon of Christ, the real and momentous presence of God in our Midst, the God Who is with us, Emmanuel (cf. St. Matthew 1:23).

This is our way of venerating the Icons that adorn our homes and the Temples of our Church Communities. Let us then, regardless of the material nature of the icons - whether they are hand-painted or printed, on wood or paper, covered in silver and gold or presented in a simple frame - let us venerate them with love and with spiritual ardor. And let us not forget that we too are "temples" as the Apostle Paul has said: Do you not know that you are the Temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you? (I Corinthians 3:16). So let us also give due respect to the icon within each one of us, the image of the Living God, as well as to all our brothers and sisters who bear the same image, and who dwell in the same Church."

[www.assemblyofbishops.org/news/scoba/the-feast-of-the-sunday-of-orthodoxy](http://www.assemblyofbishops.org/news/scoba/the-feast-of-the-sunday-of-orthodoxy)

**Prayers For the Health and Salvation of those in need: Many  
Years!**

His Eminence Archbishop Alexander, Hieroschemamonk Ambrose (Young), Abbot Tryphon, Mitred-Archpriest Nicholas (Harris), Mitred-Archpriest Daniel (Kovalak), Archpriest George, Fr Dcn John Wesner, Mat. Myra (Kovalak), Pres. Eva (Koutroulelis), Madison Race & the child to be born of her, Catharine Mann, Paul Beard, Harry Hiras, Evelyn Chabal, Amelia Kuzmiak, Juliana Matusiak, Isaac Bannister, Michael Lazorchak, Brian Gunter, Elizabeth Larson, Joanna Bohlander, John Dykes, Alexis Gross, Mary Fish, John Sam, Innocent Sam, Chris Gehret, Bridget Youmans, Jennifer Updegrave, Stephanie Raptis, Steven Reynolds & those suffering from the wars and unrest in Ukraine, Russia, & the Middle East.

***Our Catechumens:*** Melissa Czock, Jiselle Macari, Spencer Leoutsakos, Benjamin Zachariah (Military), Garette, Morgan, Charlotte & Nathaniel Fallon, Rick Lucas, Dean Johnson, Jennifer Benick, Joseph Fazio, Dallas Compton, Jonathan, Madison, Felicity & Edmund Race, Mason Hall

**Prayers for the Newly Departed: Memory Eternal**

His Grace Bishop Seraphim (Sigrist) +2/7, Archimandrite Luke (Majoros) +2/12, and All those who have lost their lives in the wars & unrest in Ukraine, Russia, the Middle East and around the world.